

609
File with minutes
THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

January 31, 1963

MEMORANDUM FOR

BROMLEY SMITH

Governor Stevenson has prepared an analysis of his position with regard to Cuba during the crucial week.

It would seem to me a good idea to file this document along with the minutes of the Executive Committee.



Arthur Schlesinger, jr.

UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE
TO THE UNITED NATIONS~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

To : Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr.

From: Adlai E. Stevenson *ASR*

I have at long last reviewed the entire file on the Cuban crisis in view of Alsop's most recent article.

I can summarize the import of my oral comments and written memoranda as follows:

1. We should not launch an air strike or invasion until we had had used the peacekeeping machinery of the OAS and the Security Council.
2. We should institute a blockade limited to weapons only, and not including POL. The latter should be added if escalation of the blockade became desirable to increase the pressure. The blockade should not be made effective until after the OAS acted, with substantial support for our resolution from the Latin Americans.
3. We had an obligation under Article 51 of the Charter to take the issue to the United Nations Security Council, and we would also gain a political advantage by doing so ourselves before the USSR or some other country did so. But we should not proceed in the Security Council before announcing our blockade, because of the danger of political moves by someone else (USSR ?) to prevent us from acting militarily. So we should do it concurrently with the President's announcement of the blockade.
4. In the President's speech and in the Security Council we should, in addition to the blockade and threat of attack to wipe out the missiles, suggest a political program which would (a) counter objections to our military action, (b) offer a realistic possibility of achieving our objectives without the risk of military escalation, and (c) exploit the tension

prevailing

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

-2-

prevailing to bring about a drastic favorable change in the Cuban political situation. (My hypothesis was that, as a result of the United States military steps and the Security Council hearings and the possible resolutions it might adopt, the USSR might relieve the immediate danger to peace by rendering the weapons inoperable, but not immediately remove them, let alone withdraw Soviet military personnel from Cuba. Moreover, if US-USSR negotiations followed, which seemed likely, whatever happened in the Security Council, we would have to be ready with a political program anyway.)

5. I suggested that the various components of a political negotiation might include:

a) "Neutralization," both military and political, of Cuba (into an entity like Austria) or at least "demilitarization," i.e., removal of all Soviet military forces and aid and possibly limitation on Cuban arms. Either of these objectives was seen as a way of ending in a reasonable period of time Communist domination of the Cuban Government.

b) United Nations observer teams in Cuba at once to insure against surprise attack against anyone and to serve as a long-range guarantee to us of Cuba's "neutralization" or "demilitarization."

c) Guaranty of territorial integrity and "political independence" of Cuba by American states.

d) A United States demand for total Soviet evacuation of Cuba would inevitably produce counter demands, and the achievement of such a major political change in Cuba would justify similar "demilitarization" by us of Guantanamo, the military utility of which was limited anyway.

e) Reaffirmation of our willingness to consider, after the immediate offensive weapons threat had been removed, elimination of all foreign missile bases in the context of the pending disarmament treaties. But we should reject the idea of bargaining on the withdrawal of missiles from Turkey and Italy in connection with Soviet missiles in Cuba because it would divert world attention from the danger to world peace of the Soviet move in Cuba, and would cause political repercussions in Turkey and Italy.

The above

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

The above political objective was, of course, more far-reaching than merely dismantling and withdrawal of the missiles, as it included at a minimum total withdrawal of Soviet forces. Contrary to the Alsop-Bartlett assertions, we did not and never would have suggested trading Guantanamo for the limited objective of merely rendering the missiles inoperative.

When the President decided not to include initially any political program other than an offer of a US-Soviet meeting, I proposed that in the United Nations I call for both the dismantling and "withdrawal" of the missiles and offensive weapons under United Nations supervision (not just rendering them inoperative), and without making any political offer of our own to bring this about.

Note that Alsop's essential accusation is that I proposed to trade Guantanamo for "neutralization of the missiles" instead of "neutralization of Cuba." This is a totally different proposition from what I proposed.

At the meeting on Saturday, October 21, when the President, as I recall, asked everyone's final position, I opposed air strike and invasion until the peacekeeping machinery of the OAS and UN had been used and proposed a political program along the above lines. When you came to New York on Monday, after the basic lines of policy had been decided, we also made some oral suggestions to you about the last draft of the speech which the President was to give that night, because we felt that it was not entirely clear that the missiles themselves were actually present in Cuba and that we were demanding their "withdrawal" and withdrawal of other offensive weapons, as well as the dismantling of the sites. Our letters to the President or the Security Council and the Secretary General demanding an immediate meeting of the Security Council, together with our draft resolution to submit to the Council, had already been prepared and provided for "withdrawal" of offensive weapons as well as dismantling of the sites.